

Montana Department of Military Affairs
Disaster & Emergency Services Division
State Emergency Coordination Center

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Situation Report for July 26, 2007 (issued @ 1500 hrs.)

07 FIRES

I. Background Information

Since June, hot and dry weather has dominated the region creating very high to extreme fire conditions. Fire Indices are at an all time high while fuel moistures are low. Accompanying the high indices are weather patterns that have set the conditions for lightning and lightning caused starts. High pressure weather patterns over the region are responsible for the high temperatures and little to no moisture. Occasional cold fronts push through the region causing severe lightning storms that ignite wildfires. Rain has accompanied these fronts but a return to a high pressure system mitigates any moisture that fell. The weather forecast project a continuing of the high pressure systems through August and possible into September.

See http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire_behavior/fire_behavior.pdf for Fire Behavior Predictions.

II. Current Incident Situation

Little Wolf, Ahorn, Novak and Meriwether Fires are being managed by Bennett's Type I team

- **Little Wolf Fire** in the Wolf Creek drainage, 547 acres, reduction in acreage due to more accurate mapping. Lewis and Clark County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been activated. Little Wolf is 95% contained. Personnel assigned: 73. Cause: Lightning
- **Ahorn Fire** on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Lewis and Clark County is at 15,000 acres. 0% Containment. Personnel Assigned: 289. Structures threatened and evacuations in place. Cause: Lightning. The fire continues to move to the east out of the wilderness.
- **Novak**, in Lewis and Clark County in the Lewis and Clark National Forest, is at 1,859 acres. Novak is 70% contained. Personnel assigned: 131. Cause: Lightning
- **Meriwether** located in the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness is 2,200 + acres with 0% containment. Evacuations in place. Structures Threatened. Personnel Assigned: 8. Cause: Lightning.

Fool Creek WFU on the Lewis and Clark and Flathead National Forests in Lewis and Clark County is at 6,262 acres. Reinartz's Fire Use Management Team. Personnel assigned: 73.

Cause: Lightning

Owl on Yellowstone NP and Gallatin NF. Wilder's IMT2. The Owl Fire is 2,500 acres. 0% contained. Wilder's Type 2 IMT will be transitioning into command today. The fire is threatening 50 structures. Personnel assigned: 91. Cause: Lightning.

Pattengail Creek on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF. 10 miles NE of Wisdom. 4,256 acres and 25% contained. Type 3 Incident Organization. No structures threatened. Personnel assigned: 28. Cause: Lightning.

Rugby on the Lewis and Clark NF is 12 miles west of Neihart. 15 structures are threatened. 130 acres with 75% containment. Angell's T2 IMT. Personnel assigned: 148. Cause: Lightning

Walk In on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. 8 miles northwest of Ashland is 370 acres with 50% containment. Personnel assigned: 109. Cause: Lightning

Garceau on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Kechter's Type 2 IMT. 2,803 acres and 40% contained. Personnel assigned: 204. Cause: Lightning. Timber and grass. Active fire behavior with short crown runs and long-range spotting. Structures threatened. Evacuations in progress

Skyland on the Flathead NF near Summit. LaFave's Type 2 IMT. Skyland is 420 acres with 0% containment. Personnel assigned: 137. Cause: Lightning. Active fire behavior.

Conger Creek on the Lolo National Forest, 20 miles north of Ovando. The fire is 350 acres with 0% containment. Structures are threatened. Personnel Assigned: 20. Cause: Lightning

Black Coulee, six miles south of Malta on lands managed by Lewistown Field Office, BLM., MT. Type 4 IC. The Black Coulee fire is 5,660 acres, reduction in acreage due to better mapping and 100% contained. Personnel assigned: 19. Cause: Lightning. Grass. Wind-driven fire behavior with rapid rate of spread. Structures threatened.

Sawmill Creek on the Lolo NF. The Sawmill Creek Fire is 110 acres with 0% containment. Personnel assigned: 11. Cause: Lightning. Twenty-two miles southeast of Missoula, MT. Timber. Active fire behavior with torching. Structures threatened.

Diamond Ring in Custer County, 20 miles northeast of Miles City. The Diamond Ring is 300 acres and 100% contained. Type 4 IC. Personnel assigned: 10. Cause: Lightning.

Campbell in Custer County, 15 miles south of Miles City. The Campbell fire is 800 acres and 100% contained. Type 4 IC. Personnel assigned: 4. Cause: Lightning.

NEW LARGE FIRES (Large fires are fires over 100 acres in size)

Bull Creek 10 miles south of Hays. The Bull Creek Fire is 200 acres with 30% containment. Type 3 IC. Personnel assigned: 33. Cause: Lightning

Railley Mountain on the Flathead NF is 15 miles northeast of Seeley Lake. The Railley Mountain Fire is 130 acres and 0% contained. Type 4 IC. Two structures are threatened. Personnel assigned: 6. Cause: Lightning.

III. Weather

No Red Flag Warnings or Fire Weather Watches have been issued at this time.

Definitions of a Fire Weather Watch and a Red Flag Warning

A fire weather watch or red flag warning is issued when the combination of dry fuels and weather conditions support extreme fire danger. These products are written for land and fire managers to highlight the increased fire danger.

A fire weather watch is issued up to 72 hours before the above conditions are expected to occur.

A red flag warning is issued when the conditions above are occurring or expected to occur within the next 24 hours.

Weather Forecast

See the Daily Outlook: http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily_outlook.pdf.

IV. State Declarations

- Statewide Declaration of a Wildland Fire Emergency

V. Local and Tribal Declarations

- **State of Emergency.** The following counties have declared a state of emergency:

Lewis and Clark	Ravalli
Lake	Granite
Cascade	Missoula
Beaverhead	Sanders

- **Disaster Declaration.** The following counties have declared a wildfire disaster:

Teton	Gallatin
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VI. Local Government Emergency Operations

- The Lewis and Clark County Emergency Operation Center was activated on July 19, 2007.

VII. Requests for State Financial Assistance

- N/A

VIII. Summary of State Resources Committed (through the SECC)

- MT-DES currently has two employees deployed with Incident Management Teams (through the Northern Rockies Coordination Center).
- One Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk module is deployed for initial attack. The Blackhawk and its module are staged in Helena.
- One Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk and module is deployed for initial attack. The Blackhawk and its module are stationed in Missoula.
- July 20, 2007 at 0700 the SECC was activated and staffed to a Level III status with extended hours (0700-1900) The MT DES staff Duty Officer is available 24 hrs and may be reached at (406) 841-3911.